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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4027
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5066
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5325
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0489
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3325
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4697
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0589
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2177
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 003116

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [UN](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: NEGOTIATORS FOCUSED ON HOW MANY COMBATANTS WILL
GET GOVERNMENT JOBS

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

11. (C) The political adviser to the UN peace team told DCM November 27 that the Government of Nepal and the Maoists were arguing over how many combatants would get jobs in the security forces. John Norris said the issue preventing an arms management agreement was not who was a combatant. The political adviser was confident that the "People's Liberation Army" (PLA) would turn in its weapons. His main concern was that the Maoist combatants be occupied once they entered the camps. He expressed regret that neither side seemed seriously engaged in the issue of the Maoist militia and welcomed suggestions on how to disarm it. Prime Minister Koirala's Foreign Policy Adviser, Dr. Suresh Chalise, also described the core issue under discussion as ultimately a matter of jobs. He was also confident that Maoist arms would be managed. He told the DCM that he expected the arms management agreement would be signed November 27.

Basically A Political Agreement

12. (C) John Norris, the political adviser to Ian Martin, the UN Secretary General's personal representative to the peace process, told the DCM November 27 that the tripartite technical agreement on arms management was "basically a political agreement." In response to a question about the standard that would be applied to determine whether a Maoist combatant was in fact what he or she claimed to be, he downplayed the issue. Norris claimed that the Government and Maoists were focused primarily on how many and which combatants would be eligible for jobs in the Nepal Army and the police forces. The Government, Norris said, was trying to resist being pinned down on the issue because it wanted to keep leverage over the Maoists. Meanwhile, the United Nations had been pushing both sides to agree on how many would be integrated.

Of Combatants and Weapons

13. (C) Norris stated that the UN had no ready way of

determining whether a person claiming to be a combatant was one. Furthermore, the Government was no longer insisting on a one-to-one ratio of combatants to weapons. The current plan was to list Maoist weapons by unit because that was the way the Maoists themselves divided them up. When asked what incentive the Maoist combatants would have to turn in their weapons, Norris indicated that how many weapons turned in would be a deciding factor in the Government's final decision regarding how many Maoist combatants would be permitted to join the Government security forces.

Crucial to Keep Combatants Occupied

¶4. (C) Martin's political adviser expressed concern that the Maoist combatants be kept occupied in the camps. It was better for them to be busy inside rather than making mischief outside. The UN, he said, did not have in mind live fire exercises by the Maoists, but there was some discussion of allowing them other military training. DCM emphasized that the entire point of arms management was to separate Maoists from their weapons. Norris added that the Nepal Army (NA) seemed determined to make the conditions inside the cantonments as poor as possible. That, Norris stressed, would be a mistake. The secondary effect of the NA's attitude would be to make the combatants discouraged about their future prospects if they did join the Army or the other security forces.

Militia Overlooked

¶5. (C) Norris expressed regret that neither the Government nor the Maoists were seriously engaged on the issue of the Maoist militia. The Maoists were claiming -- to the UN, at least -- that the militia would turn in their modern weapons. The political adviser stated, without explaining, that the "People's Liberation Army" wanted them. What would happen to old weapons, rudimentary bombs and the like was still an open question. He welcomed any U.S. suggestions on how to collect these arms. The UN could help address the problem by aggressive monitoring of Maoist behavior, he added. Ultimately, it would be up to the Nepali police to ensure that the militia did not use the weapons to intimidate people.

Maoists Want Jobs

¶6. (C) Prime Minister Koirala's Foreign Policy Advisor, Dr. Suresh Chalise remarked to the DCM November 27 that the Maoists were pushing hard in the negotiations for government jobs for their people. They were demanding 14,000 slots for members of the "People's Liberation Army" in the Nepal Army or the other security forces and 20,000 jobs elsewhere in the Government. Chalise said that he had argued the PLA should get 5-7,000 slots and those assigned would have to meet the standard recruiting criteria.

Weapons Not An Issue

¶7. (C) Despite repeated questions from the DCM, Chalise seemed confident that Maoist weapons would not be an issue in the future. The Maoists had agreed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that it would be illegal for them to hold or display arms outside the camps, and the Government intended to hold them to it. He maintained that Maoist weapons would become a law enforcement issue. The good news was that slowly the Government was reestablishing police posts. The Prime Minister's adviser was optimistic that the technical agreement would be signed November 27.

Comment

¶8. (C) This would not be the first time that the UN Mission here or Chalise have painted an overly optimistic picture of

the issues at hand. While there is certainly an argument to be made for an expansive definition of combatant if that means more Maoist fighters are out of circulation, the value of such an expansive definition will be lost if the actual fighters remain outside. Likewise, the Maoists may turn in weapons, but we would be more comfortable if there were some sort of minimum level of weapons that they had to turn in enshrined in the technical agreement. Even the UN's Norris admits that neither side has adequately addressed the militia issue. We will work with S/CRS and other donors to develop ideas on weapons amnesties and other possible mechanisms to get the militia's weapons under wraps.

MORIARTY